

the truth that comes by theheartclub

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Summary:

mike has always been good at avoiding things, but there are some things you can only avoid for so long

the truth that comes

“Tell me the truth, Mike.”

Mike freezes. He never expected it all to come back to him like this. He'd thought about it, over and over again, but for whatever reason he just never pictured himself standing here with it all weighing down on him.

There's a stinging in his chest when he sees Will wipe a tear from his cheek. It was quick, clearly to keep from him seeing, but it didn't slide under the radar.

Mike knew the truth. Deep inside, he knew that his heart belonged with Will. For longer than he cared to admit it had already been there. Now was the time to admit it, but he didn't want to hurt anyone.

“Mike,” Will says in a harsh whisper. Another tear falls. He's quick to wipe it away. “Do you love her? I never wanted to do this, but I have to. Do you love her or me?”

Mike shakes his head. That wasn't an answer, he knew that, but the one he had wouldn't make it past his lips.

“Will, I-“

“Mike. Give me an answer.”

Mike opened his mouth again, this time to actually attempt a real answer, but the only thing to make it out was a broken sob. Then another after that. Then it didn't really stop. The tears flowed and his hands lifted to first cover his face, then to tug at his hair.

Will softened at the sight. It was near impossible not to. He extended a hand to Mike's shoulder, eventually pulling him into an embrace, their bodies pressed together.

“I never wanted to hurt anyone,” Mike mumbles, the sound of his voice muffled by Will's shoulder. “I don't want to hurt El. I never want to hurt you. I'm sorry.”

Will nods, his fingers carding through Mike's hair. It's wavy now, the way it gets when he doesn't comb through it after washing it. Will likes it that way.

"I don't know what to say," Mike adds, his fingers have now curled into the back of Will's shirt. "I don't know what to tell anyone. I don't know what to do."

Will sighs. He wants to help. So badly he wants to tell Mike it's okay and make things better again, but he can't. Not this time. This is Mike's battle, not his. "I can't tell you that. I can't tell you who to choose or what to do, Mike. You have to figure it out."

It takes Mike a few moments to let go, to let it sink in that Will can't be his anchor this time. He needs to figure this one out on his own. He pulls away from the embrace that Will was kind enough to not break first. He nods.

"See you later then?" he asks, his voice hushed as he wipes the tears from his cheeks.

"Maybe," Will answers, and it might actually hurt him more than it hurts Mike.

It's only a few days after the confrontation between the two of them, but the rest of the party decided that they had to bury the hatchet for at least one night. Everyone wasn't about to pay for Mike's stupidity. Even if that's what ended up happening a lot of the time.

They weren't allowed to talk about it, that was the rule, but Mike figured that didn't apply once everyone was asleep. At this point, he was bursting at the seams, and a sleeping Will was much easier to speak to than a conscious one.

"Will," he whispers, just to confirm his suspicions. When he receives no response, he inches closer to the seemingly unconscious figure beside him.

Will couldn't be sure why he pretended to be asleep. He easily could have told Mike that he was awake, and they could have talked about

whatever he wanted to say. But something in Will told him that it was better if he remained silent, so that's exactly what he did.

"I uh, I know you're asleep," Mike continues. Will can feel his breath on the back of his neck now when he speaks, the warmth of a body beside him. He knows that he doesn't want it to leave. "So I don't know why I'm saying this to you right now. I think I just need to practice. To hear myself say it out loud."

Will is near holding his breath at this point. It isn't necessary, but he's so afraid that he might miss a word that Mike says he doesn't want to risk it.

Mike takes a shaky breath. "I love you. Not like I usually say I do. Like I really love you. Not like I love El, or at least like I do now. I don't know if I ever loved her like that. I just, what I'm trying to say is, I've made my mind up. I understand if it took too long. I know you might hate me right now. I just need you to know this is how I feel."

Will has the compulsion to tell Mike he's awake, that he's actually heard all of that, but he doesn't. He's too afraid. Things just feel too intimate at the moment, like telling Mike would ruin whatever was happening at the moment. So instead, he just squeezes his eyes shut and waits until he hears Mike turn over to breathe again.

It's days later and Mike thinks he's never been more terrified. It should be obvious that it's not true, he's faced monsters of an assorted kind throughout just his years of upper level schooling, but he's sixteen years old and he has to break up with his girlfriend for his best friend. His male best friend. The weight of the world is on his shoulders.

"You don't-" Will starts, but in a way he's glad Mike interrupts him. In a way he already knows he's wrong.

"I can't not do it, Will," he says, but his voice is small. Mike's defense is typically aggression. Will is used to seeing him show fear in acts of anger or frustration. It's rare to catch him looking this small. This genuinely afraid. Because this isn't a monster, this isn't something he

can use a bat to knock down or even shoot with a gun. No one can help him. He's got to do it on his own. "Even if she hates me. Even if everyone hates me."

"She won't hate you, Mike," Will responds, and he means it. El couldn't hate Mike, he knows that. He's sure of it.

Mike is quiet for a moment, but then his eyes flick back up to Will from their view of the floor. "Do you hate me?" he asks just above a whisper.

This takes Will by surprise. Those were words he was certainly not expecting to hear, but he didn't want Mike to mistake his silence for uncertainty of an answer. He's quick to find the words. "No! No. I don't hate you. I love you. I don't think I could ever hate you. No matter how brainless you can act sometimes."

Thankfully, that makes Mike laugh for just a moment. Soon he returns to his solemn expression. "I love you too. More than anything in the whole universe. You know that, right?"

Will smiles as he takes Mike's hand into his own, giving it a small squeeze. "I do know that. I also know that you're going to do this and everything will be absolutely fine. Okay even. Maybe, just maybe, it might turn out good."

This brought back a slight smile from Mike, which was enough for the moment being. "I'm feeling better about those odds," he says, and Will smiles too. Contrary to what Mike likes to think, the odds aren't always against them.